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The Stone Mountain Memorial

An Achievement of Art in Engineering

By EDWARD M. SEVICK, '30

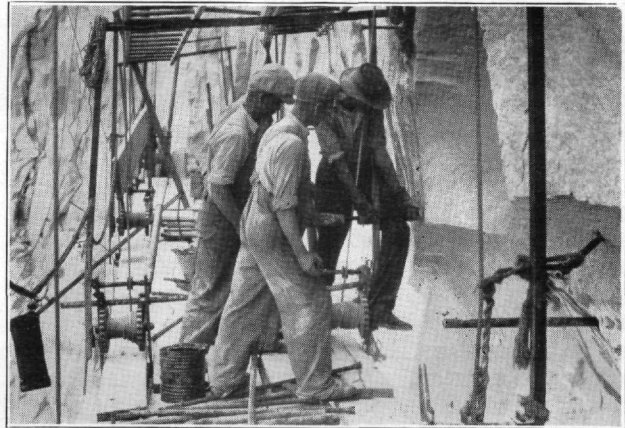
The Stone Mountain memorial in Georgia, memorial to the Confederacy and to "the valor of the soldiers of the South," is now rapidly emerging from the rock of the mountainside. It will consist of a central or reviewing group, representing the Confederate High Command, and groups of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. The equestrian figures in the central group will be as tall as a ten-story building. Below the central group, a great Memorial Hall, to be dedicated to the women of the Confederacy, will be carved out of solid granite at the base of the mountain.

Location

Stone Mountain is in DeKalb County, Georgia, about 20 miles northeast of Atlanta, near the geographical center of what was the Southern Confederacy. It stands alone in the midst of a plain, and is the largest solid body of exposed granite in the world. It is an imposing mountain to be in such a country of low hills and scrub pine. Even the great pyramid of Gizeh would appear humble beside it, although from a base 764 ft. square, the pyramid rises to an altitude of 488 ft. The mountain is 1,000 ft. high and 8,000 ft. long. Its foundations underlie a great part of the State of Georgia. At varying depths the substrata of Stone Mountain have been encountered in borings as far north as the Blue Ridge Mountains and as far south as the coastal plain.

Age

Geologists say that the mountain is the outstanding geological phenomenon of the western hemisphere, and that it is older than the Rocky Mountains, or the Appalachian Mountains, or the Alps, or the Himalayas. It was formed in the very beginning of the formation of the earth, coming up from the molten center of the earth as a bubble rises from the bottom to the top of a boiling pot. On reaching the upper crust of the earth, its movement was halted, and there it cooled and solidified. It remained for millions of years underneath the outer crust, until the shrinkage and



Working on the face of the mountain.

wrinkling and erosion of the crust of the earth exposed it to view.¹ It is estimated that the mountain erodes at the rate of about one-quarter of an inch in a thousand years.

Plan of Memorial

On the north side, Stone Mountain drops almost straight down from top to bottom, making a majestic precipice almost 1,000 ft. high. On this north side will be a central or reviewing group, an infantry group, a cavalry group, and a group of artillery, which together will form a panorama sweeping across the precipice a quarter of a mile or more, producing the effect of a mobilization of the armed forces of the Confederacy.

The central group will be composed of equestrian statues of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and four other Confederate generals. In addition to these, to the right and left, in the general panorama, there will be carved the likenesses of five selected heroes from each of the States composing the Confederacy.

Size

The size of the figures is in scale with the size of the mountain, making them the largest in the world. From the top of the head of General Lee to the feet of his horse will be as high as a ten-story office building. The Lion of Lucerne could be placed in the crook of the left elbow of General Lee and would not be visible from the ground without field glasses.²

Memorial Hall

At the base of the mountain and directly below the central group will be Memorial Hall, dedicated to the women of the Southland. This will be an immense semi-circular shrine cut into the mountain. Across the front of it will be 6 Doric columns, each 41 ft. high and 7½ ft. in diameter. Each column would weigh 150 tons if disengaged. Between columns will be 13 ft. of space, enough to permit passage of railroad cars which will be

(Continued on Page 12)

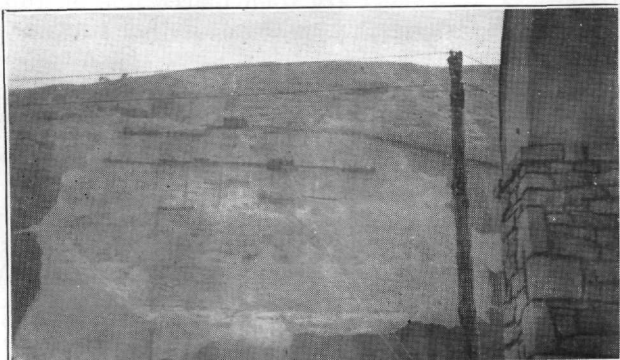


Photo by Author

Stone Mountain, 1927

¹ Taken from the Handbook issued by the Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association, Atlanta, Ga.

² Ibid.

to a panel and over each panel will be carved the name of the State to which it is dedicated.

In the center of Memorial Hall, will be left standing an immense block of granite, out of which will be carved a female figure symbolizing the fortitude and devotion of the women of the Confederacy. It will be the largest statue in America.

Directly in front of the hall will be a great lagoon or reflection pool, which will give the illusion of flowing under the mountain.

Ideals Embodied in Monuments

Not only in size, but also from the standpoint of imperishability, this monument will be a marvel. Since time immemorial mankind has striven to erect monuments which time could not destroy. One by one, however, these temples and memorials have disappeared, but the memorial on Stone Mountain probably will last as long as the race of men.

The monuments of Egypt were erected to glorify the vanity and splendor of Egyptian kings. The monuments of Greece were erected to glorify the perfection of the human form. The monuments of Rome were erected to perpetuate the glory of Roman dominion—the march of the Roman legions from the deserts of India to the British Isles. “But the Stone Mountain Memorial,” said Hollins N. Randolph recently, “will glorify loyalty to principle, devotion to duty, and sacrifice of self.”

STONE MOUNTAIN
(Continued from Page 5)

used to haul away the material cut out. Around the interior of the hall will be cut 13 columns, representing the States of the Confederacy. The space between these columns will be dressed down